

Coffee to Go | Proper 11

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

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SPEAKERS

Karin Peter, Blake Smith

Karin Peter 00:26

Welcome to Coffee to Go, where we center ourselves in the season scriptures and holy days of the Christian tradition. I'm Karin Peter. I'm here with Blake Smith, and we welcome you on the journey. So where are we with Jesus this week? I'm assuming that Jesus is still in the boat where we left him last week when the crowd surge literally pushed him out into a boat on the water. Jesus has been teaching. And this week, he uses another farming analogy. If you listened last week, you know that Jesus was talking about planting, scattering and planting seeds. So there are different kinds of soil. So today, we're going to look at planting the whole field instead of just scattering all over the place. And we can imagine that as Jesus is looking at over the crowds and teaching he sees in the distance, the fields where grain has been sowed, even as he is speaking to the crowd on the shore. So let's hear our Scripture.

Blake Smith 01:34

All right. Our scripture this week comes from the Gospel according to Matthew, the 13th chapter, the 24th through the 30th verse, He put before them another parable, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field. But while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where then did these weeds come from?' He answered, 'an enemy has done this.' And the slave said to him, then do you want us to go and gather them. But he replied, 'no, for in gathering the weeds, you would uproot the wheat along with them, let both of them grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time, I will tell the reapers, collect the weeds first, and bind them in bundles to be burned. but gather the wheat into my barn.'" In Greek, the weeds planted by the enemy, and our listeners can't see this, but I put enemy in air quotes.

Karin Peter 02:54

I know it's horrible to have to always say, Okay, I'm using air quotes.

Blake Smith 02:58

But the weeds in Greek refer to weeds that have a poisonous quality, and actually can be very toxic. The danger here, then, is not the presence of the weeds, the bad or the evil, but the potential toxicity of the weeds. What does that bring out of us? What does it cause and us, etc.? In many nations, and

predominantly, perhaps in the United States, I mean, we know this quite well, society has just gotten to be one of incredible division, partisan division, on all kinds of issues and topics and things. And it's not just political. I mean, it's an all kinds of things in our lives. And we often adopt a rigid set of beliefs. And for us, they are our truths. And so we claim them as truth. But the danger in that is that all other perspectives or beliefs then become lies, right? If they're not the truth, then they may not be lies, but they are not the truth. And we see it in the news. We see it on social media. We see it in our communities, courthouses, I mean, it's just all around us. And the level of toxicity in dialogue, and debate and conversation is off the charts. We don't we don't just disagree with those that don't think like us. The toxicity that builds in us, mocks them, and then we cast them as other, as an enemy with or without air quotes, or as being evil, and we want to excise them from our realm. We want to just kind of encircle ourselves or surround ourselves with people who think and talk and believe and agree with us and we just want to get rid of all of that. But here in the Gospel of Matthew, we learned that good and bad, whether that be friends and enemies, right and wrong, yin and yang, hope and despair, whatever it is all those that that conflict, if you will, that that difference happens all around us. And it's not up to us to decide to eliminate all that are not like us. It's just, I mean, I think of people in my life that I have thought, oh my gosh, I can never be friends with them as matter of fact that the gentleman who was the best man in my wedding, we met in our 11th grade year, when we were in high school, and we ended up sitting across from each other in homeroom, and in our school, and we hated each other. I mean, he was a church member, I was a church member, we met at a church event, and it was just like, I think we were so much alike, that we hated each other. And it's like, we didn't talk. But then we got seated across from each other, and we became best friends. So I mean, had I gone with my initial instinct, I would have never had that, that friendship, so. So we just needed we need to be careful about that, because we do use that to eliminate others from our lives. All those that aren't righteous enough, are liberal enough or conservative enough or Christian enough. But the responsibility of identifying what can and will be present in God's field is not up to us.

Karin Peter 06:33

Yeah. See, that's the hard part Blake.

Blake Smith 06:35

Yep, yep. It belongs, that responsibility belongs to the harvester, which is God. We know from the scriptures that out in the field, the rain falls on the just and the unjust. And our role is just to remain deeply rooted, yielding good fruit and doing what we can to make the field a place where all of God's creation can thrive. So a couple of questions we might think about are when do I default to casting others as bad or wrong?

Karin Peter 07:07

That's usually, when somebody takes my parking space at the store,

Blake Smith 07:12

Well, maybe Yeah, yeah.

Karin Peter 07:14

And those kinds of irritants happen, and we go, "Oh that stupid person" or whatever. And it's like, what, what, but we fall into that habit that if it's not, according to my plan, it's other and so. Yeah.

Blake Smith 07:29

And if it's other it's bad, right? <Yeah, absolutely.> Obviously, right? So another question would be, is my voice contributing to the toxicity in the surrounding community and culture, you know, our words are so powerful, for good or for bad? And so we need to think about whether or not we're contributing, if the toxicity is boiling up in us, and we're contributing to the good or the bad? And finally, what steps can we take to help the field thrive? Are we going to be fertilizer or water? Are we just going to simply work very hard not to uproot others? Whatever it is, how can we help the field thrive?

Karin Peter 08:14

How would how do we participate in that holistically? So as I think about this, how can we experience this this week based on what you were sharing, it's like, Well, this week, let's just be a nutrient and not a toxin. I think that's probably my, my mantra for this week, I'm going to put it on a post it note on my mirror, be a nutrient, not a toxin. And try to share only affirmations in all your social media posts. All the ways that you communicate with people, just make them make them authentic. I mean, we don't want any kind of I don't want to say "BS" on the podcast, but okay, we don't want that we want affirmations we

Blake Smith 09:03

You mean I can't be passive aggressive?

Karin Peter 09:06

No passive aggressive, it's, it's be authentic and share affirmations, when you post on social media and, and when you engage with others in all the different ways that we connect, or make a point to read a news article or an opinion piece from a publication that you know has a perspective different than the one you hold. So I do that in the morning, as much as it makes me crazy, but it really helps me to remember that my perspective is not the only one out there. And finally, learn something new about a different culture, or a different religion, or a different people with whom you're unfamiliar, eat traditional food of a different culture or listen to music from a different ethnic group and, and try to explore something you haven't explored before to have an understanding of someone who's different than you all All good options, I think we're trying to continue to experience the this kind of balance of what happens in God's kingdom. And what our role is as disciples.

Blake Smith 10:15

And who knows, we may find some really good friends and some good experiences and even new wisdom in being a part of somebody else's life and culture. Well, I want to finish off with a blessing. And our blessing today comes from *Prayers for the People: Things We Didn't Know We Could Say to God* by Terry Stokes.

Oh, Holy Spirit, sovereign over our emotions. pull us away from the brink. Breath of God fill us as we pause to inhale and exhale. Help us think and speak productively attacking the problem, not the

person. Flush the pride out of our system, that in our anger, we might not sin. Save us from that perverted pleasure offered by acrimony and let the sanctifying work in us prevail, once again. Amen.

So thanks for joining us here at Coffee to Go. It's been a pleasure and we hope that we'll have you join us again for the next Coffee to Go and our next part of the journey through the liturgical seasons and holy days of the Christian tradition.